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MASTERMIND OF '08 MUMBAI ATTACK LAKHVI HELD IN PAK

Lashkar-e-Toiba operations commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was arrested in Pakistan on terror financing charges

FUNDING TERRORISM THROUGH DISPENSARY

A UN proscribed terrorist, Lakhvi was arrested from Lahore by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab province on Saturday. Lakhvi (61) is accused of running a dispensary to fund terrorism activities. He was on bail since 2015 in the Mumbai attack case. His trial will be held before the Anti-Terrorism Court in Lahore, official sources said

ACTING UNDER GLOBAL PRESSURE

- The arrest follows Paris-based terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force's pressure on Pakistan to take action against terrorists using its territory to carry out attacks in India
- Lakhvi was designated as a global terrorist by the United Nations in December 2008 for being associated with LeT and al-Qaeda

1.5 Lakh

PAK RUPEES PAID MONTHLY TO LAKHVI TOWARDS 'PERSONAL EXPENSES'

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Bharat Biotech's swadeshi vaccine receives panel nod

With 2 manufacturers getting nod, rollout may happen in a week

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @New Delhi

A government-appointed panel of the apex drug regulator on Saturday recommended emergency use authorisation for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, India's first homegrown vaccine against Covid-19. This comes a day after it approved a vaccine against coronavirus by AstraZeneca-Oxford University.

The committee said the recommendation for the vaccine's restricted use in emergency situations was in the "public interest as an abundant precaution, in clinical trial mode, especially in the context of infection by mutant strains."

Bharat Biotech, in collaboration with the ICMR, has developed Covaxin from inactivated SARS-CoV 2, isolated at the National Institute of Virology, Pune. Although the vaccine has demonstrated good safety and immunogenicity in phase 1 and 2 clinical trials, it is still undergoing phase 3 trials and, therefore, its efficacy remains to be established.

The Centre also issued a statement that the subject expert committee (SEC) of the Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation, following its meetings on Friday and Saturday, recommended the vaccines for consideration and final decision of the Drugs Controller General of India.

"Grant of permission for restricted emergency use of vaccine (is being given), subject to multiple regulatory conditionalities, to Serum Institute of India, Pune," said a statement by the ministry of health and family welfare.

The back-to-back permission granted to the vaccines could mean they will be rolled out simultaneously in about a week. Sources said the unscheduled meeting of the SEC on Saturday to reconsider Bharat Biotech's application was called under government pressure after the panel had refused permission a day earlier citing insufficient data.

CONTINUED ON: P9

There seems to be a political desire to release an Indian vaccine ahead of the visit of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and there was pressure from local groups

Member, National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration on Covid-19

A health worker administers a shot as part of the dry run for the vaccination rollout in Mysuru on Saturday. The exercise was held in five districts | UDAYSHANKAR S

Save for teething troubles, mock drive smooth in Karnataka

Bengaluru: The dry run for the vaccination rollout across five districts of Karnataka more or less went off "smoothly" with some glitches related to internet connectivity, beneficiaries not turning up as they were unwell, and not reporting to vaccination site. According to Medical Education and Health minister Dr K Sudhakar, the exercise was conducted smoothly as per protocol at three sites each in Bengaluru Urban, Shivamogga, Mysuru, Kalaburagi and Belagavi districts. Around 100 vaccinators and 375 beneficiaries were part of the dry run, officials said. Sudhakar explained that the vaccine rollout is expected to start this month itself and it will be given for free of cost initially to one crore health workers. The Centre will issue guidelines on administering the vaccine for other sections of society in stages and the state will implement it, he added. While some vaccination sites in Mysuru district faced internet glitches, hampering real-time uploading of data on the Co-WIN software. Some primary health centres in Bengaluru Urban started the mock drill late. At the Vidyapeetha PHC in Bengaluru, only a few beneficiaries turned up as many were unwell. | P9

EASE OF DOING BIZ

BUSINESSES IN STATE CAN NOW OPERATE 24X7

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a big move intended at generating more employment and increasing revenue, the State Government has decided to allow shops and commercial establishments, which have a staff strength of 10 or more people, to operate 24 hours on all days of the year.

The final notification was issued by the Labour Department on Saturday. Last year, the department has issued the preliminary notification proposing permission to allow businesses to operate 24x7 and had invited objections. Now, a final notification has been issued and businesses can operate 24 hours, once it is published in the Official Gazette, which is expected to happen within a few days. The order will be in effect for three years.

"This has been done to generate more jobs and to increase revenue. It has come amid the economic slowdown induced by the coronavirus pandemic and the move is expected to boost the economy," a senior official of the department said.

So far, businesses that are required to operate round the clock needed separate permission from the Labour department. "With this modification, all businesses, by default, can operate 24 hours without additional permissions. This is another step towards making the state more business-friendly and increasing ease of doing business," the official said, adding that the local administration in cities and districts used to fix the timings for businesses.

The notification states that the government "permits all shops and commercial establishments in the state, employing ten or more persons, to be open on 24x7 basis on all days of the year". P5

IND-AUS CRICKET

5 players isolated; Covid-19 protocol breach probe on

Chennai: Five members of the Indian team — Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubhman Gill, Prithvi Shaw and Navdeep Saini — have been isolated from the rest of the contingent after a fan posted a video of them dining at an indoor restaurant. The five will be allowed to train during the period, but under strict protocols, and will not be allowed to mix with the rest of the squad, the Cricket Australia said. As per CA's Covid-19 protocol, players are allowed to dine outside their hotel but only outdoors. "The BCCI and CA are investigating the matter and seeking to determine whether the outing constitutes a breach of bio-security protocols," said a Cricket Australia statement | P13

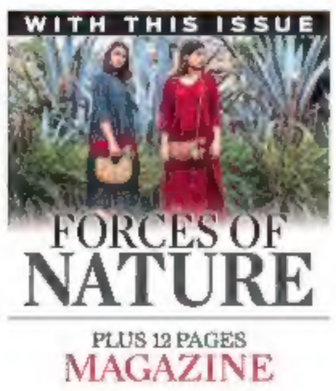
EXPRESS READ

Former HM Buta Singh passes away at 86

New Delhi: Former Union Home minister Buta Singh, who had served under four PMs, died at the AIIMS, Delhi, on Saturday. He was 86. Singh was an eight-time MP and also served as governor of Bihar.

Exports slip for third month on a trot

New Delhi: India's exports slipped by 0.8% in December 2020, marking three consecutive months of dip, while rise in imports widened the trade deficit to $15.71 billion. Exports in December stood at $26.89 billion. P12



Farmers issue R-Day tractor rally ultimatum if deadlock continues

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chandigarh

A day after the farmers threatened to step up their agitation, the protesters on Saturday issued an ultimatum to the government and said they will take out a tractor rally to Delhi on January 26 if their demand for the repeal of the farm laws and legalising of MSP was not met.

Announcing the decision of the seven-member coordination committee of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, chief of BKU (Rajewal group) Balbir Singh Rajewal and president of Krantikari Kisan Union Punjab Darshan Pal said: "We have given a call for a tractor-trolley parade to Delhi on January 26. The parade with the national flag will be called the 'farmers republic parade' and will take place after the official parade."

"We intend to be peaceful. We told the Central government long ago that it has only two options, either repeal the three farm acts or use force to evict us," the farm leaders said. Rajewal and Pal said the time had come for decisive action. They had chosen January 26 for the rally for two reasons: Republic Day represented the supremacy of the people while the day will also mark two months of their protest.

The tractor rally on January 26 will go ahead if there is no resolution during the talks on Monday. Lohri/Makar Sankranti on January 13 will be observed as Kisan Sankalp Diwas by burning the copies of the three laws. January 18 will be celebrated as Mahila Kisan Diwas to underline the role of women farmers, and January 23, the birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose, will be observed as Azad Hind Kisan Diwas. Protests will be held outside Raj Bhavan in all state capitals. The leaders said although the government had agreed to "minor demands" on air pollution and Electricity Amendment Bill, it was yet to give them legal shape. CONTINUED ON: P9

SOURAV SUFFERS MILD HEART ATTACK

Indian cricket board president and former India skipper Sourav Ganguly suffered a 'mild' heart attack on Saturday when he was in the gym and had to be admitted to a private hospital where doctors found multiple blockages in his coronary arteries. Ganguly underwent angioplasty and a stent was placed in one of the arteries. Doctors said his condition is stable. Ganguly was rushed to the hospital in the afternoon following complaint of chest pain. Sourav's brother Snehasish Ganguly said that he was stable. Cricket fraternity, led by Virat Kohli and Sachin Tendulkar, wished Sourav a speedy recovery. West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and governor Jagdeep Dhankhar visited him in the hospital.

REVENUE DEFICIT

As you WFH, Excise officials wring their hands!

BALA CHAUHAN @Bengaluru

WOULD it surprise you if someone told you that working from home could actually be hurting the State Government's revenues? Well, at least the Excise Department officials think so.

The loss in excise revenue in the current fiscal could be because of the work from home (WFH) culture, as people are not venturing out much to pubs and bars, according to some senior state Excise officers during a review meeting of the department by Excise Minister H Nagesh on Saturday. They even went to the extent of urging the minister to prevail upon the Chief Minister and end the WFH culture in the state. Excise revenues have been severely hit because of the pandemic-induced lockdown between March 23 and May 5, 2020 and the steep rise in excise duty on all slabs of Indian Made Liquor (IML) a day after the CL2 (retail liquor stores) were opened in May last year.

Only in the third quarter of 2020-21 the department's revenue collection at Rs 16,405 crore had surpassed the collection of Rs 16,218 crore during the corresponding period in 2019-20. P7

MORALE BOOSTER

To boost the morale and confidence of the Excise guards and head guards, the government has re-designated them as excise constables and head constables.

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306 TO 374	27.01.2021 ; 6.00 pm IST	28.01.2021 ; 6.00 pm IST
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